

3/11

PLANTING STORIES

The Story of
companionship,
with Pothos



Co-funded by
the European Union

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WELCOME



The Planting Stories Pathways project is brought to you by KulturNest e.V. Germany and Tilia – association for the promotion of culture and cultural heritage, Croatia.

During in-depth research in both countries we discovered a simple and surprising phenomenon that happens between people and plants. When we truly connect with our houseplants, both we and they flourish.

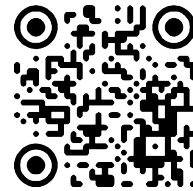
From these experiences, we've created 11 zines for people who are curious to learn how to develop their connection with plants and with themselves. The fun-to-use zines are filled with simple activities, reflections, and ideas inviting readers to explore their relationship with plants in their own way, at their own pace.



Zines can be printed on any ordinary printer and used whenever it feels right – whether there's a single plant or a green corner available. There's no right or wrong way to work with them.

We believe this gentle connection with plants offers comfort, grounding, and resilience that travels with people wherever they go.

For the full range of Planting Stories educational materials, more information on the background of this zine and how to use it, please scan this QR code.



A few words from this author

Hey, I'm Beth, your host and lead-author of this zine about Pothos, or 'Brian' as I like to call the Golden Pothos who grows along the strings I have run across my studio ceiling. I'm a painter, and it can be quite a solitary job, but Brian keeps me in good company! When I look at his bright new leaves unfurling as if looking for the next adventure, I am also encouraged to be curious and keep on going. Sometimes it even feels like I have a faithful labrador, always by my side.

So I am happy to introduce you to Pothos, our guide for companionship.

How much time do I need?

This depends on you, everyone likes to learn at a different pace. Perhaps set aside 20 minutes at first, or a full hour if you have it. You can complete the zine in one go or work through slowly, coming back to learn again when you have time. However, the most important thing is that you have uninterrupted time to yourself and a plant to work with.

What materials do I need?

Besides time;

1. Ideally a pothos plant, but another plant next to you is just fine.
2. You will also need a pen or pencil and, if you like, a variety of colours.
3. Come with curiosity, ready to learn.



How ready am I to start learning today?



I am not really open to this.



I am open to this and I feel ready! I have time, space, a pen and my plant.



I'm curious but I don't have the materials I need.



Whatever happens is ok. I'm ready.



Oh! Let me just grab my pencil and a plant.



I need extra motivation to start.

Is there something you can do to become more ready?

Take care of that first and come back another day if you need to.

It is now time to arrive, to focus on this learning journey.

Sit with your plant.
Take a few deep breaths.
Become aware of where you are, get as
comfortable as you can.

Look carefully at your plant, take your time.

Gently touch its leaves, feel the soil, check its
roots, stems, shape, colours...

Take a few more deep breaths while doing this
and.... take your time.

How does it feel to slooow dooown?





Observe your plant again, write down or
sketch anything you notice. How wet is the soil?
What colours do you see in the leaves? How tall
is the plant? How would you describe its health?
Does it have a smell? What do the leaves feel
like? Is there any new growth? Is there anything
else remarkable?

This is the story of a Pothos, but it is also your story.

In this Zine, we are discovering the stories of Pothos and perhaps this could mirror some of your own stories. Just as you have checked in with your plant, take a moment to check in with yourself. How are your surroundings? What colours do you show the world? What about the colours on the inside? Are you feeling tall or small today? How are your roots? Where or what are your new shoots exploring?

With a deep breath, smell your hands, does the smell remind you of something? Imagine your hands like the pothos' leaves are your connection to the outside world, reaching out to meet new people and experiences.

Take one of your leaves and gently shake your plant's hand to say hello.... Ooops! Did I get that the wrong way around?



Again, take a moment to notice that you are sitting next to your plant, and your plant is sitting next to you. If you would like to, draw a picture of the two of you sitting next to one another.

On this page, you can read some facts about Pothos. On the opposite page, explore what the fact might mean as a metaphor in your own life.

Use your imagination and write freely, using more paper if you need to.



Pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*) is a tropical plant from the beautiful island of Moorea in the South Pacific. It has also settled in very warm countries such as South Africa, Australia, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, the Pacific Islands and the West Indies.

Our friend loves sunshine! Amazingly, Pothos also thrives in the shade.



Pothos could be called outgoing. They are vines and in their natural habitat, the young shoots travel along the ground until they find a tree to climb. These shoots look much like the plants we have at home. Once climbing, they produce much bigger leaves, up to a meter long!! Their aerial roots hug the tree to help pothos climb.

This is a “shy flowering” plant, meaning that it does not flower often, even in the wild. This is due to a gibberellin (GA) biosynthetic gene, *EaGA30x1*, deficiency in the species. Flowering can be induced, by spraying the plant with the gene.



There are several different types of Pothos, known as ‘cultivars’ in the houseplant community. Common varieties include ‘Golden’, ‘Neon’, ‘Njoy’, ‘Pearls & Jade’, ‘Marble Queen’, ‘Jade’, ‘Manjula’, ‘Global Green’, and ‘Jessenia. I just like to call mine Brian! Perhaps you will discover a name for your Pothos too...

Hint, refer back to the previous page

Perhaps you are also far from home or would also love
to travel? Reflect on this in writing...



When I am not getting much light to nourish me I...



Pothos keeps its leaves small until it comes into
companionship with other trees. To me this seems...



“Shy-Flowering”... in my own life this means...



There are many different plants all called ‘Pothos’
despite different colours and behaviour. Sometimes I
can also see differences in the other humans around
me. Differences make me think and feel...



Pothos needs the companionship of other plants to reach its potential.

Which of the following statements describes you best:

- I'm a bit like Pothos, I love to reach out to others, even strangers (different varieties!)
- I'm a bit shy, but I enjoy the company of my close companions.
- I like it when people reach out to me.
- I prefer to be with my own variety.

Think a bit more about companionship. What type of person are you and what type of relationships do you enjoy? Why?

Handwriting practice lines consisting of two sets of dashed lines on a light green background. The first set has 5 lines and the second set has 10 lines.

Take a look at how your Pothos is growing. Does it hang, is it climbing? Can you see any aerial roots? Anything else? How do you think this arrangement supports growth?

Pothos' shoots can be guided to grow along threads, it can climb up a pole or you can let it hang from a basket. Take a moment to reflect on the following statements, which ones resonate with you?

- I like to encourage my plants to grow exactly where I want them to go.
- I like to work with the plant, seeing where it is growing already and then supporting it.
- I like to leave the plant to grow wherever it wants to.
- It depends upon the plant, some need more/less support from me.

How we work with a plant to guide it could remind us of our human relationships too.

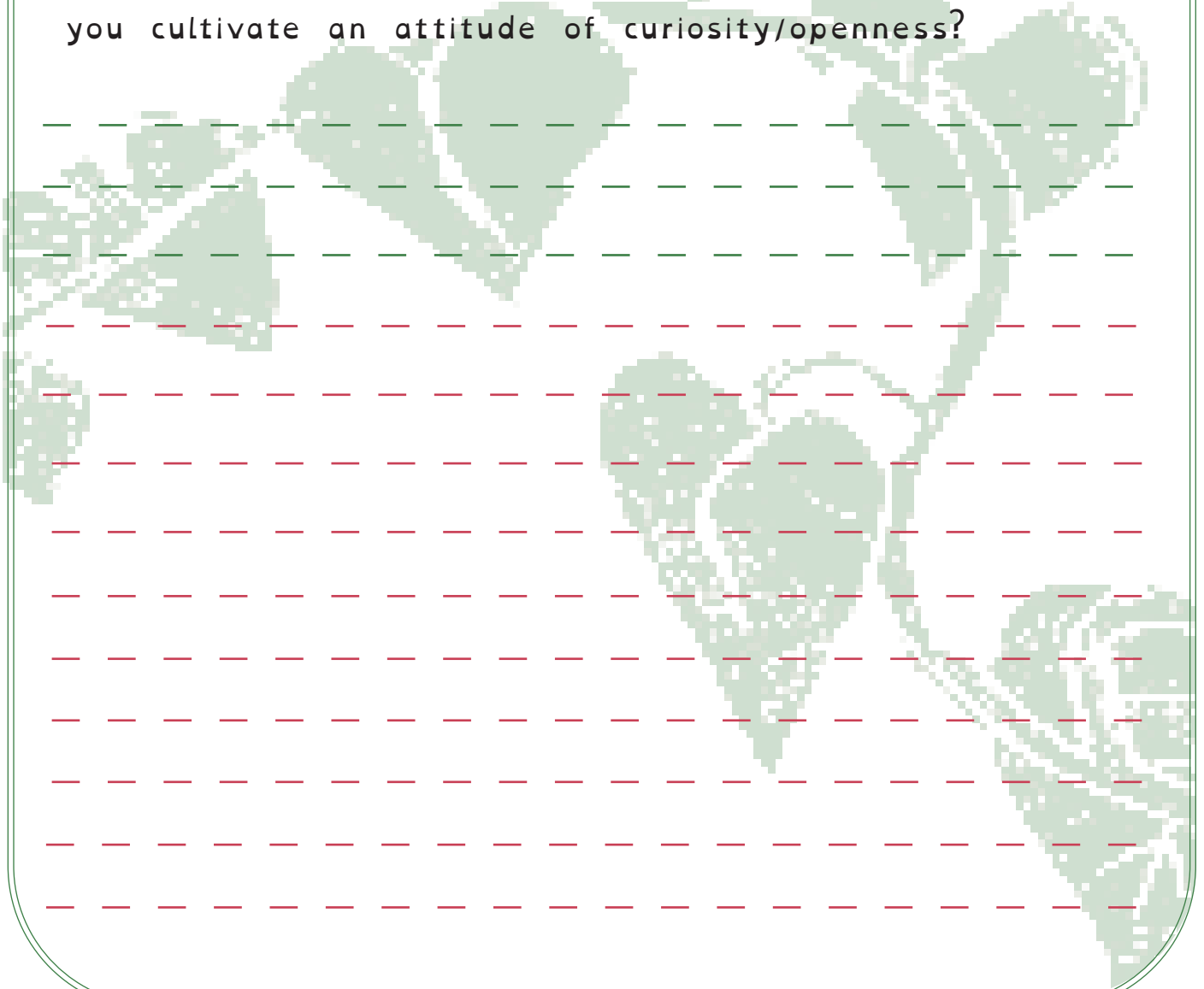
Take a moment to think of a few people in your life. In which ways does this metaphor resonate with you when you think about your relationships and how they grow or develop?

Metaphorically, Pothos could be considered a curious plant, always on the lookout for new adventures.

Look at the shoots and aerial roots, where are they going? How does this resonate with you?

- I also love to escape from my 'pot' and learn about other people and cultures.
- I'm most comfortable staying at home, in my pot!
- I like to explore, but I'm glad to know where I am rooted.
- Curiosity leads me to ask questions and learn from people with different traditions.

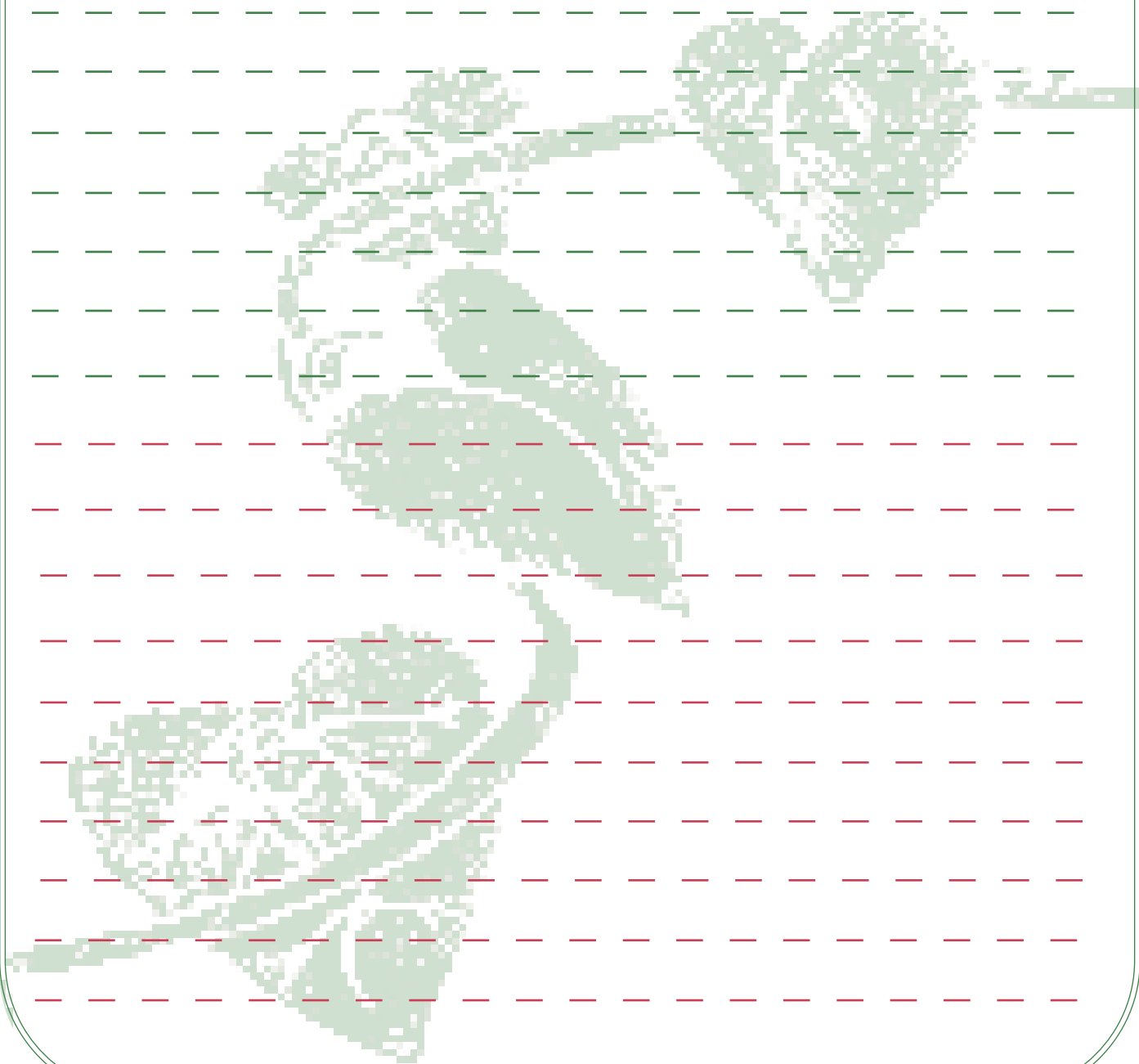
What could you learn here from pothos? In which ways could curiosity enhance your relationships? How do your companions show their curiosity towards you? How could you cultivate an attitude of curiosity/openness?



Thinking about companionship...

Choose another of the facts from above about Pothos which you found interesting or connected with. If you are not working with Pothos today, find out something about the plant you have in front of you which you find interesting.

How does this speak to you?



Closing reflections

What have you discovered about companionship by learning from Pothos?

- About the plant:

- About yourself:

- About relationships?:



Closing reflections

- What have you enjoyed most about this exploration?

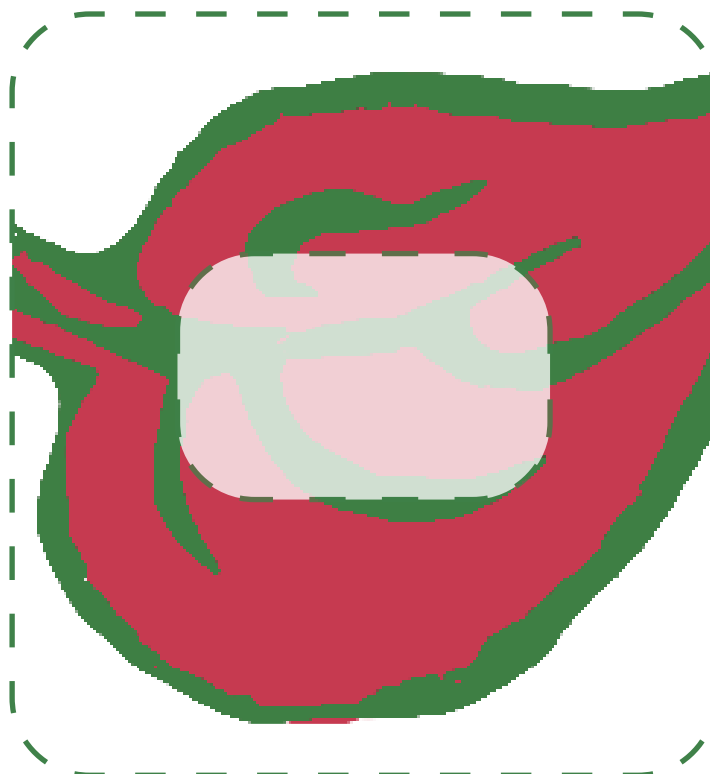
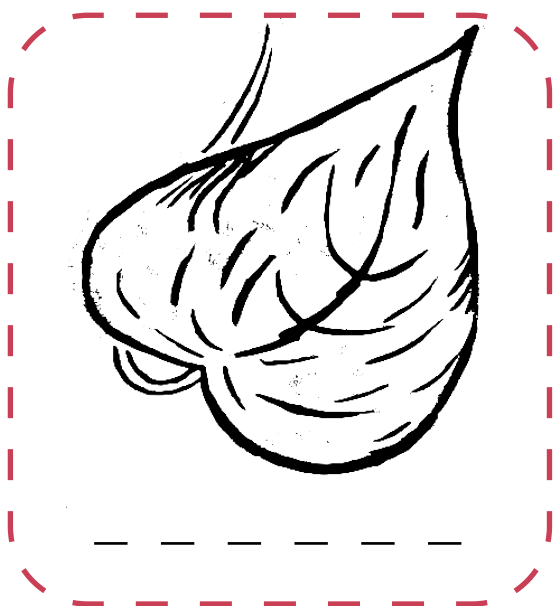
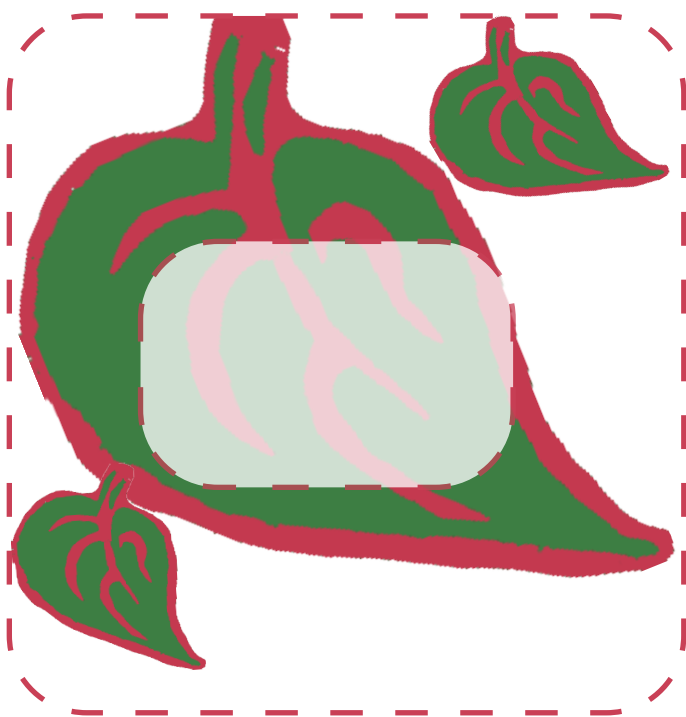
- What has changed in the way you look at your plant now?

- What do you notice about your surroundings now?
Has anything changed?



Closing reflections

On the leaves on this page, or on a separate piece of paper, write down the most helpful words that you would like to remember. Cut these out and put them in a wallet or a coat pocket so you always have them with you. Take them out from time to time and continue your reflections.



Here is a little poem that I wrote for Brian.

Perhaps you would like to write your plant a poem too?

Hey Brian, why are you cryin'?
Did I over-water you?
Is that a frown? Your leaf went brown!
Now what should I do?

You're my bestie plant friend,
Right there from the start,
Sometimes you're a mystery,
Or perhaps I'm not that smart.

Yet, when I look and listen,
Tune in to how you grow,
I hear a deeper wisdom
Than all the facts, to know.

You reach your tendrils down to me
I give you a high five,
And smile at you with gratitude,
Thanks for being alive.



THANK YOU FOR TAKING THIS
JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND
CONNECTION

Co-created by
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Elisabeth Fraser

Check for other resources at:
<https://www.kulturnest.org/socio-cultural/planting-stories>
or udruga-tilia.hr/plantingstories

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